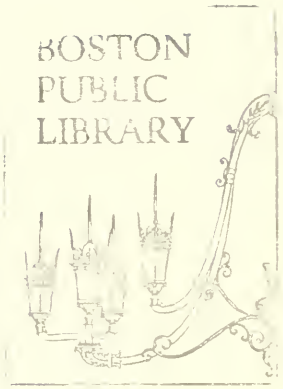
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Notes Toward a General Plan for the South End

Purpose: To summarize for the staff the thinking that has been done during the past year toward a South End area -- velopment program.

I General Objectives

(1) Definition of the Area - ...cal "South End Planning Area" is assumed to run from Stuart and Kneeland Street to the route of the Inner Belt, and from Huntington Ave. to the Central Artery. This definition goes a little beyond the traditionally defined South End because of the necessity to relate the area to its surroundings. This planning area may be broken down into the following sub-areas:

(a) Central SE: Mass. Ave. to Dover, Harrison to NH Railroad
(b) Inner SE: Stuart and Kneeland to Dover and Berkeley to Central Artery.
(c) Outer SE: Inner Roxbury: Mass. Ave. to Inner Belt, Harrison to railroad
(d) Lower SE: South of Harrison Ave. from Dover to Inner Belt.
(e) South Back Bay: Huntington to NH Railroad.

(2) Planning Responsibility Despite a high level of citizen interest and organization in the SE, the making of a long-range land use plan and redevelopment program is assumed to be the responsibility of the Planning Board. The plan must be an acceptable guide for action. The plan must integrate the hopes and expectations of all groups in the area -- the vested interests and city agencies plus the ordinary citizens. Many plans have been made for the South End, but the plan will emerge only thru collaboration with all groups concerned. The community itself must be brought into the planning process.

(3) Type of Action Contemplated Ultimately the South End (as defined above) except for public housing and certain institutions, must be almost completely rebuilt. This is the concensus of expert opinion so far consulted about the area.

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The feasibility of rehabilitation has not yet been demonstrated but may be possible. Therefore the plan assumes overall clearance and redevelopment in orderly stages over an extended period at a rate consistent with the resources available, the market, and relocation capability.

(4) Interim Program But obviously total rebuilding of this area of approximately 1 square mile and 70,000 people will take many years, if not decades, to accomplish. And we are not yet ready to begin it, except for such opportunity projects as Castle Square or expansion of certain institutions. Therefore the more solid parts of the area must continue in use for perhaps a generation or so while redevelopment proceeds elsewhere. The conservation, and possibly rehabilitation, of this "solid core" should be part of the overall renewal program for the area. Positive efforts to stone off blight (such as clean up campaigns) and provision of improvements (such as play areas) should be instituted here. Elsewhere, in those parts having a short life expectancy -- where housing is obviously not rehabilitable -- public improvements should not be contemplated unless they are part of the long-range staged redevelopment (the new street lights in the Castle Square area is a good illustration of what to avoid), and private rehabilitation should not be encouraged.

(5) Conservation area definition A determination must be made of the solid core and of those areas in need of early redevelopment. A first attempt at drawing such a line has already been made, but more accurate survey data is needed to give an authoritative picture. This determination should be suggested only to key leaders in the area, for if made public it might be a disastrous effect on values of property outside the solid core.

(6) Scale of Rebuilding Due to uniformity in age and condition of buildings, fairly large tracts may be redeveloped at a time. The 25 acres and 900 DU of Castle Sq. seems a good size. This will permit drastic changes in the street

pattern and facilitate large-scale integrated housing development within super-blocks formed by a few main streets. Assuming large-scale redevelopment, steps must be taken to avoid monotonous appearance and institution-like character of buildings and environment, as well as social and economical homogeneity of the occupants.

(7) Predominant Uses All staff plans thus far produced have assumed that the bulk of the SE would be rebuilt as a residential community. The residential area will extend approximately from Dover to Kendall Streets and from Washington to Huntington Ave., with extensions at Cathedral housing, City Hospital residential, possibly Castle Sq. housing, and Kerry Village. Industry, wholesaling,&goods oriented business will extend south of Washington to Brookline Street, and may include Castle Square area. A second industrial area will be in Inner Roxbury. Institutional uses center around City Hospital, New England Medical Center, Morgan Memorial, Franklin Institute and the Cathedral. Local business areas, schools, churches, and recreation facilities should be distributed so as to serve the residential community.

(8) Building Types The type of housing that now seems most feasible for the South End is the 2-to-4-story walkup apartment or row house with a sprinkling of elevator apartments included. The construction must be first class and fireproof and buildings must be well above minimum public housing standard in amenity and convenience features if a getto-like atmosphere is to be avoided. Prototype designs and cost estimates should be made as part of the land use plan. Many interesting inovations in apartment house design are suggested by this location and by the fact that fairly large-scale redevelopment will be possible. These might include (a) clusters of diverse building types within super blocks -- each cluster having its own green area, parking, and local

shopping -- based on the West End model; (b) row houses (in short rows) within super blocks, each house having its private enclosed yard and parking space or garage; (c) garden apartments set in a park-like enclosed space from which traffic would be excluded and beneath which would be parking garages. Innovations such as 4-story row structures of two maisonnettes each, or skip-stop elevator apartments are possible. Special housing design may need to be considered for (a) single persons who board out (b) individuals who share a common board (c) the elderly (d) families with employed female head (e) students (f) institutional staff (g) transients.

If more public housing is needed to accommodate the lowest income groups -- and this appears likely -- such housing should be designed with sensitivity and should (hopefully) be indistinguishable in appearance from private housing. Such projects should, in line with present BHA policy, be of no more than 100 units each.

(9) Densities Previous plans for the South End have assumed a density range between 65 and 90 housekeeping units per net acre and a non-housekeeping unit range between 220 and 290 units per net acre. The upper part of this bracket appears at this writing a bit too high for the type of construction thought feasible in this location. Obviously density will depend on family size and composition of the intended occupants, or vice versa. The new zoning proposes a maximum FAR of 2.0 for the whole of the SE, which will permit densities up to about 90 DU per net acre for any building type. But probably we should be guided here by densities of new private apartment development having a similar market potential. The new West End will have a net density of about 70 DU per acre in predominantly high rise structures. Whitney Street project will be around 100, but in mostly small units in all high-rise structures. Cathedral

housing is about 70 in mostly high-rise. In view of these examples and guessing that the market for elevator apartments here would be limited, we should not plan for an overall density higher than 70 DU per net acre, and possibly much lower. This figure takes no account of possible non-housekeeping accommodations which, if built in quantity, would increase density.

(10) Total Capacity of the Area Within the boundaries assumed for this community the total net acreage available for residential use can run no higher than about 250 out of the area's 700 gross acres. If the overall density is no higher than 70 DU per net acre, then the top capacity we can expect is about 17,500 units. A more realistic estimate would place net residential acreage at about 200 and overall density at about 50 DU per net acre, giving a capacity of about 10,000 units. Although gross capacity is here figured in terms of the dwelling unit (housekeeping apartments), some capacity would no doubt be taken up in non-housekeeping units. As a rough approximation we might assume 3 non-housekeeping units equivalent to one DU. The 1956 program estimate of 45% of all South End living units being non-housekeeping seems high in view of limited market potential for that type of housing. Here we can only speculate on a figure of, say 20%, in which case the ultimate capacity of the area would be 18,400 living units of all types and the "realistic" capacity 10,500 units.

(11) Future Gross Population Any forecast of average household size in the South End after overall redevelopment is pure speculation. We know that child population has been steadily decreasing and the elderly increasing as average life spans lengthen. But these trends could be reversed if the area were rebuilt for predominantly family living. We do not know what the future market might be for new intown family accommodations -- unforeseeable forces might induce a return to the city for families as well as adults. But at the present moment we cannot expect this segment of the market to be very strong, nor can

we expect large amounts of public housing for families to be built here. We must plan for small households and relatively few children. Applying an average household size of 2.4 persons we get a maximum gross population of 44,000 and a "reasonable" gross population of 25,000. This area had a 1950 population of over 70,000.

II Short Range Actions Foreseeable in the South End

(1) New public recreation facility in the Newton to Dedham Street area. Probably extensions to the 1-acre site now authorized to be developed would be done in conjunction with hoped-for new private housing development adjacent, and would be partly financed by proceeds from sale of Roach Playground for industrial reuse. Credit for playground could apply toward project local grant.

(2) Public Housing for the elderly in one or more projects of around 100 units each on sites of perhaps 1½ acres each. South End is potentially an excellent location for elderly housing as indicated by its present large elderly population. Possibly in the next stage of the program (after the first six projects are built), one or more South End sites will be designated. Several sites are being considered.

(3) New Dwight School on Worcester Street to be built in near future. Site has been secured and working drawings completed. Site will include a 1-acre play area. Another school was proposed for inner Roxbury but was deferred because of uncertain future of that area.

(4) Institutional Expansion and construction, the most dynamic type of private action in the area, will be discussed later.

(5) Industrial Expansion is the other type of private redevelopment for which there is a ready market. The New York Streets project was the first such action, and the Castle Square Project will probably be the second. Beyond these projects,

long range proposals for industrial use are discussed later.

III Long Range Physical Planning Objectives and Assumptions

(1) Future Use We assume that the South End will eventually be rebuilt as a new residential community of a specialized close-in type to satisfy the presumed enormous potential market for predominantly medium rent housing. The means of inducing private enterprise to build such housing are not yet apparent, but the eventual emergence of such means seems not improbable.

(2) Link with Downtown The strongest potential asset of the South End is its centrality -- its close-in pedestrian relationship to Downtown and Back Bay. This asset must be capitalized upon in rebuilding the area. Any physical barriers or incompatible uses which seem to separate SE from CBD should be regarded as damaging the area's potential for redevelopment. More than this, if portions of the area which intrude close to the CBD at Park Square can be preserved for residential reuse, amenities centering there will be accessible to South End residents by walking, and the historic link will be maintained.

(3) General Circulation Concept What is envisioned is a completely new compact urban residential district providing modern apartment accommodations(which should, if possible, vary in rent level) for persons employed in the CBD who don't want to commute. We cannot guess the characteristics of the future population, but should not preclude families with children. Therefore some of the through streets which now cut up the area should be interrupted and heavy traffic diverted around the periphery. Also those functions which generate high traffic volumes (such as shopping centers) should be located on peripheral streets.

(4) Super Block Concept Certain major streets must necessarily form the framework within which rebuilding can progressively proceed. Those few streets

needed for heavy traffic must be improved and widened. Within superblocks thus formed all streets would be eliminated as blocks are redeveloped. Only cul-de-sacs or loops giving access to buildings and parking would penetrate superblocks. Such a scheme, based on the West End model seems the most reasonable physical pattern to shape the kind of environment here contemplated, but is only possible if redevelopment proceeds at large scale and under public control.

(5) Open Space, Since the South End has no natural amenity such as Charles River Basin, Public Garden, or Fenway, and since the chances of getting generous open space as a separately financed project (ie. separate from redevelopment) are remote, it is suggested that amenity be built into each superblock in the form of playgrounds, small parks, greenways, etc., and that such open spaces be interconnected by an overall pedestrian circulation system (which need not everywhere be separated from vehicular circulation). Such open space need not be entirely in public ownership, since its maintenance would place a heavy burden on the city. Parking garages might be constructed underground since the amount of land available for parking at grade will be limited. Each superblock might also have its own local shopping and its own day nursery for infants.

(6) Local Shopping The bulk of the local shopping should be concentrated in centers or strips along major streets around the periphery of the residential district. The streets connecting SE with CBD -- Washington, Tremont, Berkeley, Dartmouth and Mass Ave., -- are corridors of pedestrian movement which suggest special suitability for commercial frontage. Where these streets coincide with rapid transit stations, local centers are certainly indicated. Off street parking would be built into such local centers and frontage development. Strip shopping would serve the additional purpose of buffering residential areas from incompatible uses.

(7) Non-Local Business In large parts of the South End a general business, wholesaling, light industrial use is indicated. A strip between Harrison Ave. and the Central Artery plus Castle Square and parts of Lower Roxbury seem destined for this use. The old industrial buildings which occupy much of this area -- buildings still sound and in use -- present the major difficulty to its redevelopment, despite much vacant land and a demonstrated market for that type of development at that type of location. This situation makes it easier to expand into dilapidated residential areas than to rebuild old industrial areas. We do not have the solution, but assert that this industrial belt must eventually be rebuilt.

(8) Buffers If private residential development is ever to be stimulated in the South End, future residential areas must be suitably buffered from the heneral business-light industry uses adjoining. Such buffers might be (1) strips of park land, (2) strip retail business, (3) institutions and (4) extra wide setbacks with planting for new apartment buildings. Incompatibility can be minimized by keeping industrial structures low, prohibiting offensive smoke etc., keeping truck traffic out of residential areas, and by orienting new housing inward.

IV Long Range Action Program for the South End

(1) Rapid Transit Replacement of the present Washington Street elevated structure by a less obnoxious solution of equivalent capacity is probably a prerequisite to the redevelopment of residential South End. A Shawmut Ave. subway (which was proposed in 1952 from Kneeland Street to Forest Hills for a total cost of $34 million) is probably ruled out because of high cost (unless vast new sources of capital funds are found), but should continue to be viewed as a possibility. A cheaper and equally suitable route is the Boston and

Providence Railroad ROW., which would have the added advantage of replacing the railroad commuting service to the suburbs. Two stations, located approximately between Dartmouth and Clarendon Streets and Camden and Mass. Ave., would serve the South End and Back Bay. The Dudley terminal might be replaced by one at Jackson Square. The Washington Street elevated line could then be replaced by high capacity bus service via Washington, Harrison, Warren and Humboldt, as far south as Seaver Street. Crosstown express bus service would run on Mass Ave. Local bus service might also run on Tremont Street, Dartmouth - Dedham Streets, and Arlington - Castle Streets.

(2) Major Streets The following streets, at least, should probably be retained and improved for through traffic as redevelopment proceeds:

Columbus Avenue
Tremont from somewhere in Lower Roxbury to Stuart
Washington south of Castle
Albany Street
Massachusetts Avenue
Newton from Huntington to Columbus
Dartmouth-Dedham-Malden
Dover-Berkeley
Castle and new Corning from Clarendon to Dorchester Ave.
Arlington and Clarendon north of railroad cut
New Street in Lower Roxbury roughly parallel to Inner Belt.

Columbus Ave. would serve the special function of bringing SW Expressway traffic into the CBD, and the new Castle-Corning divided thoroughfare would distribute the same to streets leading into the CBD. Dover-Berkeley is the vital cross town highway connecting Central Artery with Storrow (called for by Coverdale and Colpitts). Tremont would become a sort of local parkway (possibly with Comm. Ave.- type treatment) and the front door to the SE. But expressway traffic should be diverted from it and its function kept local by judicious re-alignment at the Inner Belt. Washington, widened to 110 ft. all the way and freed of transit, would revert to its historic role as the South End's main street. Albany would be the truck route and Blue Hill Avenue extension.

3. Institutional Developments Forseeable in South End. Expansion of existing institutions is the most important private action on the horizon for the SE. All of the major institutions have plans for expansion of sites and for construction of new buildings, and some new institutions not now in the area will locate there. These are region-serving functions -- pressure for their modernization, enlargement, or re-orientation is mounting steadily, and building funds are being accumulated. Action is being slowed by current uncertainties over tax policy and non-availability of city assistance in the form of land assembly. But some action will proceed regardless. Institutional programs are briefly as follows:

(a) New England Medical Center with Tufts U. Med. College will expand into Tyler, Tremont, Oak, and Harvard-Hollis St. area, straddling both Harrison and Washington. A new general hospital unit is slated for the largely vacant Washington to Tremont block with a parking garage adjacent. Other structures will include a new medical office building, additional clinics, new research and laboratory facilities, and a school of dentistry. New housing for staff, students and convalescent patients plus parking might eventually go in the area south of Oak St. The Center will not dislodge the Chinese community occupying very old housing to east and south. It is assembling its land by private negotiation since revival of the South Cove redevelopment project appears unlikely.

(b) Mass. Memorial Hospital with Boston U. Med. School will expand into the Concord, Brookline, Albany, Harrison Ave. area. A new $3 million laboratory building is going up on Harrison and Concord, and a new $8 million education building will go up next year adjacent. Other buildings will include an out-patient department and diagnostic clinic,

a new hospital addition to include relocated Booth Memorial medical offices possibly a relocated Haynes Memorial residence halls for students and staff, and parking. Land assembly is proceeding by means of private resources. The armory will relocate in the suburbs and the structure will be razed. There is no plan for collaboration with City Hospital in providing quarters for students, staff, and visitors, but since these functions are needed for both institutions, a separate development corporation might be created to build them for both.

(c) The Boston City Hospital will be reorganized, modernized, and partially rebuilt, but without expanding its present site. The section south of Mass. Ave. will be razed and a new use related to the hospital built there. We do not know their plans for new buildings since the recent hospital study has not yet been released, but we know that capacity and staff will be reduced and many of the functions discontinued or changed. The area west of Harrison and south of Northampton previously suggested for hospital expansion will not now be so used. But there will probably be a need for new privately-built housing for staff, ambulatory patients, and visitors, for which the area Washington-Harrison-Concord-Mass.Ave. seems the logical location.

(d) The Franklin Technical Institute on Berkeley Street plans to acquire the remainder of the triangular block on which it is now situated and erect a new five-story dormitory building on Berkeley, two new classroom buildings, an auditorium, and other facilities -- all to be grouped in a sort of quadrangle with parking underneath

the central open space. A rapidly increasing enrollment will force this program in the very near future. Funds for part of the construction are available from the will of Benjamin Franklin and from the Carnegie Endowment. The Institute will acquire the land on its own, but would welcome city cooperation in land assembly -- this would be justified as a "public purpose" action since the Institute is the property of the City of Boston.

(e) Morgan Memorial has plans to rebuild most of the area bounded by Tremont, Shawmut, Broadway, and Corning with the possible exception of the Tremont St. frontage. The goodwill industries buildings on Corning St. will be either thoroughly renovated or replaced by a new structure to go up between Kirkland and Wheeler. The nursery would be replaced by a new structure on Shawmut and only the church would remain. Their housing in the area east of Shawmut would also be replaced. Their plans are based on most of their buildings being taken by the Turnpike, and this they welcome as the only ready means of liquidating their assets.

(f) Holy Cross Cathedral expansion plans are not known to us, but there have been rumors that more space is needed. Recently the bank building across Washington Street was leased by the Church for auditorium purposes. The Cathedral would benefit by removal of the "L" structure. Proposals shown herein are strictly guesswork as to their space needs.

(g) South End Music Center hopes ultimately to rebuild in the SE and share new quarters with the Children's Art Center and the South End House.

(h) Northeastern University hopes ultimately to expand southward from its present site to the railroad, westward to the Inner Belt, and northward to Hemenway. They would probably like to acquire the playground property south of the railroad for a parking lot, though not for academic purposes. A prerequisite, from the city's point of view, to disposition of playground property would be its replacement by another site in a better location to serve Lower Roxbury. There are no doubt many other institutions and private business firms in the S.E. as well as outside the area which are considering physical expansion and new construction there. Further study is needed to bring these to light.

(4) Long Range Residential Pattern

The future pattern of new residential development is probably the most difficult to predict of all the imponderables of this area. We assume here the types of housing and site layout discussed above. Although still very tentative and long range, the bulk of new housing development (whether privately or publicly financed) might assume the following pattern of superblacks and staging. Stages are listed approximately in the order that they might be undertaken:

(a) Tremont-Shawmut-Newton-Dedham area for new elevator apartments surrounding a large interior recreation space.

(b) Lenox-Tremont-Washington-Mass. Ave. area for new walk-up apartments, possibly financed under the Sec. 221 program, but not intended as public low rent nor minority housing.

(c) Dover-Waltham-Tremont-Washington area for mainly walkup apartments of high density with interior recreation space and shopping on the periphery.

(d) Washington-Harrison-Concord-Mass. Ave. area for specialized (but privately built) housing and parking to serve the medical center.

(e) Shawmut-Harrison-Oak and Corning area for similar housing for the N.E. Medical Center and Morgan Memorial.

(f) Huntington-Columbus-Irvington-Mass. Ave. area for a unified in-town apartment development on the West End model. Parking would cover most of the site not occupied by buildings and would be completely decked over to provided landscaped open space -- such decks to cover the railroad cut and unite the eastern and western parts with a 2000 ft. mall. This area would follow Prudential's housing in time but not compete with it in type.

(g) Rebuilding of the rest of the South End would then proceed at a similar scale and in a pattern roughly indicated on the land use sketch plan. If these first five stages can be accomplished, we may assume there will be no difficulty in getting private enterprize to fill in the spaces between and redevelop the remaining area proposed for residence.

(5) Local Shopping Centers

Completely new local shopping centers would be built as the residential areas are rebuilt, and located to serve a partly pedestrian local population plus considerable driving patronage, approximately as follows:

(a) Washington and Mass. Ave. - mainly west of Washington.

(b) Washington and Dover - mainly west of Washington..

(c) Columbus Ave. and Dartmouth - mainly west of Columbus.

(d) Columbus and Mass. Ave. - particularly the area Mass.-Camden-Columbus-railroad, which has potential for an auto oriented retail

center of more than local importance because of extensive land available for parking.

(e) Washington-Shawmut-Brookline-Dedham area

(f) Other smaller frontage developments as indicated on sketch plan.

(6) Industry and General Business

In order to balance the tax losses inherent in the enormous amount of new medium rent housing and institutional expansion herein proposed, extensive new industrial & general business development must be attracted to the S.E. The future industrial district would extend from Castle to Brookline, and from the Central Artery to Washington and a new street approximately on the line of Andrews St. (see sketch plan), with the probability of the Castle Square extension to Tremont as well. A second such district is seen in Lower Roxbury inside the curve of the Inner Belt, and would assume one of two alternative patterns:

(a) a triangle bounded by Northampton, Washington, Inner Belt.

(b) a strip bordering on the Belt running from Columbus to Northampton. Between the new Andrews St. and the housing project would be a recreation space to serve also as a buffer. A similar buffer might be located in Lower Roxbury beyond Kendall St. Preparation of industrial sites in Lower Roxbury should be done concurrently with construction of the Inner Belt so that spotty premature development does not spoil the area for the important region - serving functions that are suggested by this unique expressway location.

(7) A Focus for the South End

Beyond the broad pattern of land use proposed above, the filling in of details will not be attempted here, with one exception. The South End needs a focus of community life if it is to be a vital self-conscious community. This focus cannot be the local business centers for they will be on the periphery. The Back Bay has such a focus in Copley Square, which might serve as a model. And in the Holy Cross Cathedral we find a monumental building of lasting significance which automatically locates the focus. A public square is proposed between Washington and Shawmut, Dedham and Union Park Sts. facing the Cathedral and including in or about it such public buildings as possibly a new branch library, a recreation center, a new South End House, an auditorium, and other churches. A parking garage would be built under the open space, which would be landscaped and have a place for public gatherings.

Conclusion

The foregoing statement is only a tentative incomplete South End area plan -- an initial go-around. Before we can proceed with a more definite planning statement and redevelopment program we must have a general plan for the Central Area (of which SE is a part) and a housing market analysis. At this point the comments of the staff are solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

W.E. Barbour, Sr. Planner

Dec. 31, 1959

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